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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1481  
RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STOCKHOLM 001924

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ALL PARAS MARKED CONFIDENTIAL)

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/10/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [SW](#)  
SUBJECT: IRAQI AMBASSADOR TO SWEDEN CALLS ON AMBASSADOR WOOD

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Classified By: AMBASSADOR MICHAEL WOOD, FOR REASON 1.5 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: The Iraqi Ambassador to Sweden, Ahmad Bamarni, visited Ambassador Wood and DCM on December 11 and provided a frank reaction to the Baker/Hamilton report, personal views on the interests of Iran and Syria in Iraq, comments on the sectarian violence, the role of U.S. forces, and the sharing of oil revenues. Ambassador Bamarni described President Bush as a man of conviction and of his word, and looked forward to upcoming address on 18 December on Iraq policy. Ambassador Bamarni is a close associate and former fellow comrade-in-arms of President Talabani and had recently returned from Paris where he had accompanied Talabani during the latter's visit to France. Bamarni also speaks well and knowledgably about Al-Hakim. End summary.

12. (C) Regarding the local Iraqi expatriate reaction to the sentencing in the Saddam trial, Bamarni said that most people in his community were happy with the sentence. He observed that this was the verdict and sentence for the murder of 148 people and that the next case coming up was for the deaths of thousands of Kurds, a trial he looks forward to Saddam facing (Bamarni is a Kurd). Bamarni reminded us that under the Iraqi constitution the death penalty is not to be applied to persons 70 years old and above. Saddam turns 70 in April.

#### Reaction to Baker/Hamilton Report

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13. (C) Bamarni said that most Iraqis he knows do not like the report. He notes that President Bush is reviewing further information, and Ambassador Wood referred to the President's upcoming speech on Iraq on 18 December. Bamarni said he was troubled by the report's focus on a "global" Middle East Resolution as a necessary measure to address Iraq's internal problems. Regarding the proposal to involve Iran and Syria to help the internal situation in Iraq, Bamarni sees their interests as distinct from Iraq's (see further comments in paragraphs 7 and 8 below). Bamarni supported the call for an increased focus on the training of Iraqi forces and sees an important step being the increasing devolution of responsibility of force use and tactics from the Coalition to the Government of Iraq. He supported the call for efforts to promote national reconciliation but said he did not see the Government of Iraq accepting most of the other points. Bamarni complained that the report was too Baghdad-focused and did not adequately take into account the different (and better) conditions in the North and the South.

#### Sectarian Violence

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14. (C) In response to Ambassador Wood's question about what should be done to address the sectarian violence, Bamarni claimed that Al-Qaida and terrorist organizations have successfully taken advantage of the situation. He said the

answer was for the Iraqi Army and the local people to take the lead and cited the progress at Al-Anbar as a good example of what he was talking about. He cited the good relations between major families (Al-Hakim noted as a positive influence) in Southern Iraq as a good example of how these issues could be addressed. Concerning the Shiite community writ large, he said &you can see the hand of the Iranians8 in their actions. He also observed that the instability in that community is being influenced by many parties, each for their own agenda.

What should we do with Coalition troops?

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15. (C) In light of the situation Bamarni described, the Ambassador asked if the Coalition should withdraw its troops. No, Bamarni said, observing further that there are no other forces available to replace their role. He said it was only due to the presence of U.S. and Coalition forces that Iraq,s neighbors have not intervened. He said that if U.S. forces withdrew, he could see Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, each intervening to pursue their own interests in Iraq. In his view, the quick withdrawal of Coalition forces would create a vacuum that would lead to a wider conflict in the region.

Sharing of Oil Revenues - How best to do so?

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16. (C) Bamarni reminded us that under the Iraqi constitution, revenues are supposed to be a national benefit. He said they should go to a special national account from which they would be shared on the basis of population and need. He disparaged the thought of them being allocated through a governmental or bureaucratic mechanism, but did not offer an alternative.

Iranian and Syrian Agendas - In Iraq and Elsewhere

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17. (C) Bamarni said Iran,s main agenda is to be the regional actor and power. Iran,s first goal is to demonstrate that nothing in the region can happen without their involvement

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and they wish to demonstrate that Iran has the power and financial resources to underwrite their aspirations. The second goal is to develop a nuclear weapons program to support their regional power aspirations. Bamarni explained that on reflection, these aims have little to do with Iraq itself; Iraq is only interesting to the extent that it furthers Iran's aspirations.

18. (C) Bamarni saw Syrian interests in Iraq as more modest than Iran,s. He saw Syrian activities in Iraq as being a facilitator of Iranian interests. He said Syria,s second motivation to be involved in Iraq was essentially an extension of its domestic political desire to ensure nothing happens in Iraq that would threaten political stability within Syria. In his view, political stability in Syria was fragile and that beyond Iraq, Syria was obviously concerned over the investigations of Syrian involvement in political assassinations in Lebanon.

19. (C) Comment. A couple of observations. Bamarni,s views on the causes of sectarian violence seemed a little facile and meant for our audience. Of more interest were his comments on positive examples of Shiite good governance in the south and how the benefits of oil revenues should be allocated, both observations that would seem to demonstrate an understandable affinity for the Kurdish and Shiite communities. End Comment.

WOOD